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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to determine to what extent community college-based adult basic education/general educational development (ABE/GED) programs reflect program characteristics addressed in the professional literature; to identify a general state of the art for the college delivery of ABE/GED services; and to understand better the current and potential roles of community colleges in serving ABE/GED learners. Following a literature review that identified characteristics of ABE/GED programs, a survey instrument was drawn up and mailed to adult education directors in 15 states and to one "typical" and one "exemplary" community college program in each of the 15 states. Responses were received from 13 state directors, 12 exemplary programs, and 14 typical programs. Some of the conclusions drawn from the study were as follows: (1) community colleges serve a variety of adult learning needs; (2) state aid is usually provided to community colleges for ABE/GED instruction; (3) benefits from delivering ABE and GED through community colleges include broadened community support, availability of ancillary services, and long-term educational benefits for program completers; (4) certification to teach adults is required by less than half the programs, but staff training is available and most programs evaluate teacher effectiveness; and (5) community colleges have great potential to serve more and a greater variety of adults. Appendixes include an article on ABE in community colleges, survey item responses, and the survey form. (KC)

ABE/GED In Community Colleges

A National Study

Division of Adult Education
U.S. Department of Education

June, 1988

Contents:

Introduction

Adult education directors, researchers, and practitioners have often asked our office for information about community college delivery of Adult Basic Education (ABE) and GED programs.

Fifteen States use community colleges and other two year higher education institutions to deliver all or a large share of their ABE and GED services. In order to identify characteristics of these delivery systems and gather information about community college services to undereducated adults, we have conducted a study to:

1. Determine to what extent community college-based ABE/GED programs reflect program characteristics addressed in the professional literature,

2. Identify a general "state of the art" for the community college delivery of ABE/GED services, and

3. Understand better the current and potential roles of community colleges in serving ABE/GED learners.

A review of the literature revealed a variety of characteristics of effective community college ABE/GED programs. An advisory group reviewed the study design and commented on these characteristics. The group includes:

- o John Hartwig, Iowa State Department of Education
- o Mary Ann Jackson, Wisconsin State Director of Adult Education
- o Elizabeth Singer, Brevard Community College (FL)
- o Lynne Weller, Harford Community College (MD).

Adult education directors in 15 States were asked to complete a survey of program characteristics. Each State director also identified one "exemplary" and one "typical" community college program and forwarded the survey to them. The rate of response is excellent, especially for a two stage mail survey. Fourteen of the 15 States have responded with a total of 39 (of 45 possible) returns (87%). Responses include 13 State directors, 12 exemplary programs, and 14 typical programs. These States are: California, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, Texas, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

The following report outlines the results of the study, and presents some conclusions about the findings and the potential for community colleges to improve Adult Education programs and services.

For further information or to discuss the implications of this study for your program, contact:

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Literature Review and Survey Items

A review of recent literature (1985-88) and two basic references, "ABE in Community Colleges" (1981, Appendix B) and Investigation of the Cost-Benefit Relationships in ABE (1974), identified 24 characteristics of effective community college ABE/GED programs. These statements were reviewed and edited by advisory group members, and became survey items for the study.

A Likert style scale (1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Disagree, 4 = Strongly Disagree, N = No data/opinion) was used to record responses.

1. Administrative services are available (use of computers, graphics, A-V, etc.).
2. Administrative support is available (clerical, technical, other staff).
3. The college determines the program budget.
4. The system provides for FTE or other State ABE/GED aid reimbursement.
5. The budget includes local support funding.
6. The college is an official GED test center.
7. ABE/GED helps fulfill the college mission.
8. ABE class sites are located throughout the region.
9. A local advisory committee is utilized.
10. Classroom space is designed for adults.
11. Promotion and recruitment techniques are effective.
12. Student counseling is available.
13. A student assessment process is an integral part of the program.
14. Tutors are utilized.
15. Other program aides are utilized.
16. An individually tailored learning plan is developed for each student.

17. Outreach programs are offered to special populations.

18. Interagency coordination is promoted.

19. Staff training and/or staff development is provided.

20. ABE teacher must be certified to teach adults.

21. Teacher effectiveness is evaluated.

22. Program evaluation is a priority.

23. College attendance has prestige value for ABE/GED students.

24. The program is designed as a total educational system under which there is a balanced emphasis on:

    (1) clearly stated learning objectives,

    (2) assessment of learner needs and progress,

    (3) instructional processes,

    (4) guidance and counseling, and

    (5) program management and evaluation. (from Lerche, 1985.)

Survey Results

Compared to local program respondents, State directors are less certain (agree less strongly) that local programs demonstrate a number of characteristics.

For example, availability of administrative services draws a 1.00 (Strongly Agree) response from exemplary programs and 1.29 from typical programs, but a 1.46 (7 Strongly Agree, 6 Agree) from State respondents. Similar responses are given for the administrative support item.

The basic statement "ABE/GED helps fulfill the college mission" draws a strong 1.08 score from local programs, and a 1.50 from State directors, half of whom agree, but not strongly.

State directors also seem less certain than other respondents that-

- ABE class sites are located throughout the regions,
- local advisory committees are used,
- tutors are used,
- a learning plan is developed for each student,
- interagency coordination is promoted,
- staff training is provided, and
- program evaluation is a priority.

One item (the only item) with which a majority of all three types of respondents disagree or strongly disagree is "ABE teachers must be certified to teach adults." Of the State directors, five say yes, seven say no (average 2.50). Exemplary programs score 2.58, typical programs are 2.69. Overall, seven indicate strongly agree, seven agree, seventeen disagree, six strongly disagree, and two have no opinion.

Other items of interest are:

- o #13 - "A student assessment process is an integral part of the program." Typical programs are more sure of this characteristic (at 1.21) than either exemplary programs or States, though all agree that student assessment is a component of programs.

- #23 - "College attendance has prestige value for ABE/GED students", raws a 1.23 from typical programs compared to a 1.58 for States and exemplary local programs.

The last characteristic, "program is designed as a total educational system", is more strongly agreed to by exemplary programs, less so by typical programs, and even less strongly by State directors (with three strongly agree, eight agree, one disagrees, and one no opinion).

Appendix D displays the responses for all 24 items.

Comparison of Selected Responses by Types of States

Three categories of States are involved in this study:

I. Five States in which community/technical colleges are the total ABE/GED system (Iowa, North Carolina, Oregon, Washington, Wisconsin),

II. Five smaller States (serving less then 20,000 adults) where community colleges are the predominant delivery system (Kansas, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, Wyoming),

III. Four larger States (serving 100,000 + adults) where community colleges deliver services to relatively large numbers of students (California, Florida, Illinois, Texas).

Four items are of particular interest in comparing responses from these three categories of States:

1. "The system provides for FTE or other state ABE/GED aid reimbursement." All 14 respondents from State Category I indicate yes. Category II respondents show mixed responses: 7 yes, 7 no. Category III respondents indicate: 7 yes, 3 no.

2. "Staff training and/or staff development is provided." All 14 respondents from State Category I indicate yes, with 4 agreeing and 10 strongly agreeing. Of Category II respondents 7 agree and 8 strongly agree. Category III respondents indicates: 5 agree, 5 strongly agree.

3. "ABE teachers must be certified to teach adults." Only one of 14 Category I respondents answers yes. From Category II, 4 say yes, 10 say no. Category III States indicate: 6 yes and 4 no.

4. "The program is designed as a total educational system...". Category I respondents answer: 3 agree, 11 strongly agree. Small States (Category II) indicate: 10 agree, 4 strongly agree. Of the Category III States: 4 agree, 5 strongly agree, one disagrees.

Respondents' Observations

Most respondents offered valuable observations about community college systems, staffing, and programs. Forty comments are included.

State Directors' Comments-on Community College Systems:

- o Programs are part of a statewide adult system with high visibility,
- o (In my State) the community colleges have the same state board as K-12, therefore no turf problems,
- o The community college association lobbies strongly for literacy legislation,
- o Many programs assist the student in becoming at ease in the college setting,
- o Most community colleges have developed cooperative service delivery systems with school districts in rural areas,
- o There is a good deal of variance among community college programs (three State directors).

On Staffing:

- o Full time and part time instructors cooperate with and assist each other,
- o Work-study students assist in instruction,
- o Adult Education or K-12 certification is required for teaching ABE in our State.

On Program Effectiveness:

- o Good programs are those which exemplify the criteria (survey items) indicated, regardless of what agency administers them,
- o Other public and private agencies are served.

Directors of Exemplary Programs' Comments on Community College Systems:

- o There is clear coordination between ABE non-credit and credit programs such as remedial English,
- o The system and its emphasis on academic standards lend credibility and support to our program,
- o The statewide program network is beneficial and supportive,
- o Successful GED preparation students have a smoother transition into college level courses....25% continue their education through the college,
- o Because of the varied resources available to all students a community college is an excellent setting for adult education,
- o We are an affiliate of Literacy Volunteers of America (LVA),
- o Our program has 6 outreach centers, and is marketed through the community college non-credit bulletin.

On Staffing:

- o Volunteers are an integral part of (rural) ABE success.

On Program Effectiveness:

- o Computer-assisted instruction is used,
- o We run workplace literacy programs at worksites,
- o Recruiting is our major challenge (rural program),
- o The college develops as it comes to understand and respond to the wide range of academic, personal, and vocational needs of ABE students,
- o Our program serves upper level mentally retarded adults.

Directors of Typical Programs' Comments on Community College Systems:

- o Community Colleges are the most appropriate delivery systems for ABE,
- o We receive tremendous support from our small college (2000 FTE) and our community (40,000),
- o GED becomes the first step to additional schooling,
- o Classes (throughout the service area) serve as a bridge, between neighborhood groups, rural communities, or special populations and the community college,
- o GED students and test-takers get acquainted with college, and become interested in attending,
- o None of the local school districts would want to serve the entire county, nor would any be willing to contribute adequate local funds to supplement State and federal funds. We give continuity to the program and a fund of knowledge that is greater than the individual district programs could build,
- o Our growth has been possible because the college underwrites any tuitions that are not covered by our State grant,
- o Our ABE/GED program is a community-based operation designed to meet individual learners' needs. A variety of services is provided, including services for the developmentally disabled.

On Staffing:

- o Programs are staffed predominantly with full time faculty, as are many ABE/GED programs in our State,
- o ABE teacher certification is not currently required, but "qualifications to teach" and formal preparation are certainly a growing issue.

On Program Effectiveness:

- o Students benefit from seeing other adults going to college,
- o O[illegible] (in a technical college) has grown from 2 part [illegible]rs to 50 teachers (20 full time) and from 20 to [illegible]ts in 20 years,

- Use of technologies such as computers and interactive video disks are growing components in our ABE/GED programs,

- Our program has the goal of assisting adult learners to improve their basic skills to enable them to function in today's society as citizens, parents, and employees. We have the potential to take the adult learner beyond secondary completion and to equip him/her to compete more effectively in a changing economy,

- The substantial growth of our program, which has doubled in size over the past two years, attests to the importance of community college involvement in ABE/GED programs. We feel that the growth is due to the prestige value of college attendance, effective and agressive recruitment techniques, and the variety of post-secondary options available to our students once they have completed the GED,

- If we are going to be able to continue to fill the increasing need for adult education, there needs to be a greater commitment of funds.

Conclusions

1. Responses and comments indicate that community colleges serve a variety of adult learning needs in diverse settings.

2. State FTE or other aid reimbursement is usually provided to community colleges for ABE/GED instruction. This provision could be especially important to programs in those States that receive limited federal funds and that provide little or no State support.

3. There appear to be particular benefits to delivering ABE and GED through community colleges: a broadened support base (community, financial, professional, and institutional), availability of ancillary services for the staff and students, and long-term educational benefits for successful GED and diploma program graduates.

4. While certification to teach adults is required by less than half of the programs in this study, staff training is available and a large majority of the programs evaluate teacher effectiveness.

5. The Adult Education Act requires States to expand their systems in order to involve other agencies and to serve more, and a greater variety of adults. Respondents indicate that community colleges have considerable potential for service to undereducated adults. A State which has not fully considered including community colleges in their delivery system may well be missing an important opportunity to improve its ABE/GED program.

6. Since the 24 items used in this study were derived from current adult education literature, and reviewed by a national advisory group, States may wish to use some or all of these items to survey their ABE/GED programs, or to compare different delivery systems. The local program survey form is included in this report (Appendix E).

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ERIC JUNIOR COLLEGE RESOURCE REVIEW

August 1981

Adult Basic Education in Community Colleges

by John Grede and Jack Friedlander

Adult basic education (ABE) programs are intended for persons who are 16 years of age or older, are out of school, and have not completed high school. These programs include courses from the first- through the eighth-grade levels in reading, language, arithmetic, English as a second language (ESL) as well as General Education Development (GED) courses which prepare students to pass a GED test and receive a certificate. Estimates on the number of persons eligible for ABE programs range from 54 million to 64 million adults. However, only 2 to 4 percent of this target population participate in ABE programs (Hunter and Harman, 1979).

In the past, delivery of ABE has been offered primarily through the public school system and only minimally by community colleges; however, in recent years an increasing number of community colleges have added ABE programs to their curricula. According to Lombardi (1978, p. 35), within the next 20 years ABE will be transferred from the secondary schools to the community colleges in all states.

What efforts have been taken to reduce adult illiteracy? What are the characteristics of the students and instructors in ABE programs? What are the educators' experiences with ABE classes? Who funds ABE programs? And, what are the consequences of offering pre-college-level courses in an institution of higher education? Each of these questions is addressed in this *Junior College Resource Review*.

Adult Illiteracy in the U.S.

The undereducated adult is a problem of growing concern. It is estimated that over 57 million adults (16 years or older) in America not enrolled in high school have less than a high school education, and 16 million adults have less than an eighth-grade education (Aker and Gant, 1980). Also, 23 million Americans between the ages of 18 and 65 do not have skills adequate to perform basic tasks such as addressing a letter so that it will reach its destination or interpreting a bus schedule or understanding a printed explanation of finance charges. An additional 34 million Americans are able to function but not proficiently (Hunter and Harman, 1979). Such data also do not account for the fact that many high school graduates are not literate — i.e., cannot read, write, or compute at the fifth-grade level, and cannot pass the adult GED exam or the U.S. Army entrance tests (Hunter and Harman, 1979, p. 8). These and similar findings are cause for alarm. The *Chicago Daily News* (October 3, 1975) dramatically noted "22 million called illiterate." The *New York Times* (April 24, 1977) proclaimed, "Illiteracy of Adults Called U.S. Disease." The magnitude of the problem was also documented in a 1975 progress report on U.S. programs to reduce adult illiteracy. The report revealed "...an incredible gap between the number of persons who might be seen as needing such assistance and those who were actually receiving it..." (*The Adult Basic Education Program*, 1975, p. 18).

Efforts to Reduce Adult Illiteracy

The passage of the Adult Education Act of 1966 and its subsequent amendments represents the major effort of the federal and state governments to reduce adult illiteracy. States receive federal funds according to a formula based on the number of persons 16 years and older who have not graduated from high school and who are not in school. Federal funding in 1972 amounted to just over 51 million dollars. In 1976 it was 67.5 million dollars. State and local funding in 1976 was about 184 million dollars (NACAE, 1977).

While state education agencies are ultimately responsible for the administration and supervision of all ABE programs within the state, most act as conduits for funding rather than as leaders in ABE practice. The primary initiative for the establishment and programming of activities rests, consequently, in local hands (Hunter and Harman, 1979, p. 65).

Enrollments in ABE programs have increased from about 38,000 in 1966 to an estimated 1.7 million in 1976. Among participants in 1976, about 20 percent were learning English as a second language and 5 percent of the ABE students were adults taking ABE courses in hospitals, correctional institutions, and other custodial facilities. Some 35 percent were unemployed, of this 9 percent were receiving public assistance (Hunter and Harman, 1979, p. 63).

Community Colleges and ABE

In several states ABE programs funded under the Adult Basic Education Act of 1966 fell within the administration and programmatic jurisdiction of the community college (Mattran, 1977). However, the instructional programs in adult basic education and in preparation for the GED examination are centered largely in the secondary schools and in many liaison arrangements with religious centers, community agencies, correctional institutions, hospitals, libraries, CETA (Comprehensive Employment and Training Act), and many other local organizations and programs.

Most community colleges want responsibility for adult basic education for a variety of reasons — larger tax base, greater state funding, increased enrollments, expansion of the college's mission of providing educational services to adults in the community, and experience in working with educationally disadvantaged. For these and other reasons, states are transferring responsibility for ABE from the high schools to the community colleges (Lombardi, 1978, p. 35). Sometimes there is a complete takeover from the secondary schools. In Chicago the Board of Education, plagued by mounting deficits, has opted to slim down to its legal mandate and turn over its entire adult education program to the City Colleges system. In one short weekend in 1974 some 20,000 adults enrolled in ABE, GED, and ESL programs in several hundred locations became community college students. Along with Chicago, the community colleges of San Diego and San Francisco acquired sole jurisdiction over basic education for adults in the public institutions. In California, current legislative policy for adult education creates a fiscal incentive for a local community to shift some or all of its adult education classes away from the K-12 districts and into the community colleges (California State Legislature, 1981). The incentive exists because the range of courses that can be offered to adults is greater in the community colleges than in the K-12 districts. The rationale for encouraging this shift of ABE from the K-12 districts to the community colleges is based on the belief that "...adult students could benefit from better counseling, job placement assistance, financial help, and opportunities to develop a more comprehensive total educational program than what might be offered in the limited environment of the K-12 schools" (California State Legislature, 1981, p. 20).

By the late 1970s the community colleges in nearly every state were given partial or sole jurisdiction over adult basic education (Lombardi,

1978). The transfer of control over ABE functions from the secondary schools to the community colleges is taking place throughout the country at an uneven pace (Lombardi, 1978). For example, Sherron (1978) found that in Virginia only 2.5 percent of the ABE classes offered in 1978 were held in community colleges. In 1975 and 1976, about 14 percent of the total enrollment in Florida's community colleges were enrolled in adult elementary and secondary programs (Florida State Department of Education, 1977). In 1979, close to 30,000 students, representing 9 percent of the total enrollment in Illinois community colleges, were participating in ABE programs. An additional 16 percent of the students were enrolled in remedial and developmental programs for educationally disadvantaged students (Illinois Community College Board, 1980). Enrollments in ABE and high school diploma and equivalency programs in Iowa colleges in 1978-79 amounted to 4,880 full-time equivalent enrollment students (FTEE) or 10 percent of the total FTEE of 44,573. This figure was up from 8 percent in 1975-76 (Iowa Department of Public Instruction, 1980). In Washington's community colleges enrollments in adult basic education have steadily increased each year and reached 3,648 in Fall, 1978, while enrollment in high school completion programs fluctuated from a high of 6,027 in Fall, 1975, to a low of 4,510 in Fall 1978 (Terry, 1979). As we begin the 1980s, however, the extent of literacy programs in the community colleges is not known. A national study to determine the extent and nature of ABE in community colleges is needed.

Who Participates in ABE?

In terms of educational achievement, in 1976, 32 percent of the ABE students were enrolled at the beginning level (grades 1 through 4), 33 percent at the intermediate level (grades 5 through 8), and 35 percent at the advance level (grades 9 through 12). About 9 percent of those enrolled in ABE in 1976 were certified as having achieved an eighth-grade level education and 11 percent passed the GED tests. A national survey showed that just over 40 percent of the classes were offered at the grade 1 through 8 level; 32 percent at the grade 9 through 12 level; and about 28 percent were ungraded (Boulmetis, 1979).

Several authors identify profiles of the ABE student which support the generalization that the target population is at the low end of the socioeconomic scale. The authors of a classic study in 1975 characterized ABE students in large urban communities as an "...astonishing potpourri of ethnic backgrounds, educational achievements (from being totally illiterate in any language to Ph.D.s with limited English mastery), ages (adolescence to old age), generation of citizenship (first, second, third, and so on), middle to lower SES (Socioeconomic Status), native ability (from clearly retarded to exceptionally bright), and a psychiatric range from quite disturbed to normal." (Mezirow and others, 1975, p. 11). Despite this diversity, ABE students were skewed toward the disadvantaged side. Poor people were generally the rule with 14 percent unemployed, 15 to 25 percent on welfare, and at least half of the remaining group unskilled or service workers with incomes below the poverty level.

ABE Instructors

Much of the available information on ABE instructors and classroom dynamics comes from an extensive study in the urban public schools (Mezirow and others, 1975). Eighty percent of those teaching ABE courses were doing so on a part-time basis. Two-thirds of these were presently teaching full-time in the public schools, and about 18 percent were housewives, most with training or experience as teachers. Half the full-time teachers had been public school teachers, while the rest had varied backgrounds, mostly as counselors, supervisors, and administrators. The instructors were inexperienced. Half had taught ABE for only a short time, and only one-third had more than four years' experience (Mezirow and others, 1975, p. 58).

Mattran (1977) has noted that due to the part-time commitment of ABE instructors and the fact that there are few career tracks for teachers in ABE, little preservice education has been developed. Mattran's observations are confirmed in the findings of two national studies which show that there has not been much effort at the state level in establishing formal procedures for granting credentials to ABE instructors (Jones and others, 1975; Boulmetis, 1979). For the most part, ABE instructors receive in-service or on-the-job training.

Instruction

ABE classes are typically divided into levels of instruction: grades 1 through 3; 4 through 6; 7 and 8; and high school equivalency. ESL classes are usually designated "beginning," "intermediate," and "advanced." Some large adult school and community colleges further differentiate classes by elementary and secondary school designations. The wide range of student educational backgrounds and abilities is the most significant, distinguishing characteristic of ABE classes. The wide variation in literacy levels found in many classes has, according to Harrison and others (1976), produced a veritable "little red school house" learning environment.

Other factors which operate to detract from the effectiveness of ABE classes are high rates of course attrition which have been found to range from more than 30 percent to over 50 percent (Sainty, 1971; Brightman, 1974; Boudreau, 1977), highly tentative student commitment to the course, erratic attendance patterns, and an open enrollment policy which permits students to begin and stop work in a class anytime during the term. Mezirow and others (1975) found that the heterogeneous student groupings within classes, absenteeism, and turn-over were, in the teachers' opinions, the most serious obstacles to learning and teaching.

Funding

According to Lombardi (1979), ABE programs are less costly for community colleges to operate than regular programs, because most ABE instructors are employed on a part-time basis and are paid at a lower hourly rate than the full-time instructors. In Florida the state average cost per full-time equivalent for remedial and ABE was $1,279, a figure lower than the $1,323 average cost for all programs. The Florida figure for remedial and ABE programs would be even lower if the low-cost ABE program was excluded (Florida State Department of Education, 1977).

Most basic education ABE and GED programs are supported either by federal ABE funds allocated to community colleges through a state education agency or by state ABE funds. In Iowa, federal funds earmarked for ABE were used to cover the costs of 3,423 FTEE, while the state reimbursed the colleges for most of the FTEE in non-ABE federally funded courses, such as high school diploma and high school equivalency. There is no tuition charge for students enrolled in ABE programs (Iowa State Department of Public Instruction, 1980).

In some states, funding of courses is restricted to only those which are bona fide instructional offerings requiring formal student registration, attendance, and course outlines. In New Jersey only enrollments in noncredit remedial, developmental, GED, and ABE courses are eligible for state funding (Griffiths, 1979). In 1979 the Washington state legislature considered a bill to make all persons 19 and over eligible for tuition-free high school completion studies in community colleges (Terry, 1979).

Much of the funding for ABE and ESL offered in Illinois community colleges is provided through the Disadvantaged Student Grant Program (Illinois Community College Board, 1980). Under this program, special grants for educationally disadvantaged students are distributed to community college districts on the basis of enrollment in remedial and developmental courses during the previous year. The amount of money appropriated to Illinois community colleges through the Disadvantaged Student Grant Program grew from 1.4 million dollars in 1973 to 4.7 million in 1980. The largest number of students served by the Disadvantaged Student Grant Program were enrolled in ABE courses.

ABE and the College Mission

ABE has the greatest potential for growth among community college programs. Only a small fraction of the estimated 57 million Americans lacking high school diplomas participate in ABE, and few are educated in community colleges. However, in planning to increase ABE enrollments educators need to take precautions to insure that this expansion is not achieved at the expense of the reputation of community colleges as providers of sound educational services or as legitimate institutions of higher education. Roueche and Armes (1980) estimate that over 50 percent of the students now entering community colleges read below the eighth-grade level and 20 to 35 percent at or below the fourth-grade level. Many of these students enroll in developmental or remedial programs, which now represent one of the colleges' most rapidly expanding but least successful functions (Lombardi, 1978). Although there are

many notable exceptions, students enrolled in developmental education programs have a high rate of course attrition, a low rate of program completion, and limited success in developing basic skills. These findings along with the high course attrition and low program completion rates in degree and occupational certificate programs have led state officials, legislators, and the public to question the ability of community colleges to provide quality education. The profile of potential ABE students described in Hunter and Harman (1979) suggests that their educational backgrounds, experiences, and life circumstances may make them even more difficult to serve than those students currently enrolled in developmental programs. Therefore, in order not to damage the academic reputation of the community college, institutional managers should consider their resources and capabilities before expanding enrollments in ABE.

If current growth trends of pretransfer, remedial, and ABE programs persist, then enrollment in below-college-level courses may well be several times larger than the combined enrollments in community college occupational and transfer programs (Lombardi, 1978). Some administrators see the growth in basic literacy programs as another factor contributing to the loss in status for community colleges as institutions of higher education.

To maintain their higher education status community colleges could offer all their below-college-level, postsecondary education programs in an extension division or in a separate institute, such as the Urban Skills Institute, operated by the City Colleges of Chicago since 1974. The advantage of such an institute or specialized division is that it can have its own faculty and counselors, trained to work with ABE students, and have appropriate instructional materials and technologies. In such an institute credit hours, semesters, set time-frames, and other such features of college-level courses would not have to be applied to the amount of time students spent in their studies, nor would such factors have to be used as a measure of faculty workload. The institute's primary concern could be to raise the skill level of students to either find an entry-level job or pass the high school equivalency tests, and in some cases, to advance into college-level programs. But as Richardson and Leslie (1980) have noted, the colleges will have to decide whether this type of institute will be tolerated within the framework of the traditional community college.

Conclusion

Much of the criticism of ABE programs, most taking place outside the community college, has been directed at the following aspects: inadequate preparation and experience of instructors in working with educationally underprepared adults; lack of full-time commitment of instructors and staff to the field of ABE; absence of sufficient counseling and other student personnel services; poor facilities; limited choice of instructional materials and equipment; lack of means of grouping students by achievement levels; and limited integration between ABE and vocational or career education (Niemi, 1976; Aker and Gant, 1980). Given their experience in working with poorly prepared adults, knowledge of instructional technologies, and excellent educational resources and facilities, community colleges are in a good position to provide sound ABE programs. But again, if college leaders decide to expand ABE, they should take care to assess the effects of those efforts on their other programs.

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THE OREGON METHOD (Memo)

Community colleges in Oregon began in the mid-sixties. They were a new kind of institution which, according to the statutes, were to "fill the institutional gap in education by offering broad, comprehensive programs in academic as well as vocational-technical subjects." It should "not follow the established organizational pattern of other secondary and higher education institutions . . . ability to change to meet changing needs." Admission " . . . open to high school graduates or to nonhigh school graduates who can profit from the instruction offered." Community colleges "should offer as comprehensive a program as the needs and resources of the area which it serves dictate."

As you know, federal dollars for adult basic education became available about the same time as community colleges began to form. The Oregon Department of Education specialist given the responsibility for ABE was a former school superintendent. He saw the community colleges as being more flexible than public schools and, therefore, more likely to provide an open, accepting atmosphere free from the memories of institutions that individuals might have a negative association. Community college personnel at first were not enthusiastic about ABE/GED/ESL and adult high school diploma instruction. But, Cliff Norris was persistent, persuasive and, at times, pugnacious. Gradually the awareness of need and opportunity to develop a basic skills program that could fit into other curricula took hold. For the last ten years the community colleges have affirmed basic skills/remediation as one of the top three areas of instruction. The other two being vocational-technical and lower-division college transfer.

Idaho and Washington postsecondary institutions are also primary ABE providers. As in Oregon, each center has programs in surrounding communities. Only Oregon permits the student enrollments to count toward state full time equivalent reimbursement. This means that the state through its community colleges provides financial support that far exceeds the federal funding.

The Oregon method includes the following:

1. State support through community college FTE reimbursement
2. Local taxpayer support as part of regular college general fund
3. Comfortable, attractive learning center facilities
4. Community-based with instructional centers scattered throughout the district. Each center provides space for ABE/GED/ESL.
5. All community colleges are official GED Test Centers, so testing is convenient.
6. Instructors receive professional-level pay and fringe benefits.
7. Part-time teachers receive reasonable pay for their efforts. Many prefer to teach part time.
8. Staff inservice from both the college and the developmental education departments. Professional personal self-improvement is expected and often is tied to salary increase or continuation of contract.
9. Teacher support services are available, such as secretarial, record keeping, duplication, AV aids, computers and software.
10. Students are enrolled in the community college and not "going back to the high school."
11. Students have access to community college activities, counseling, testing, library, and, later, financial aid.
12. Students become comfortable with campus and become aware of additional instructional opportunities available, such as vocational-technical curricula, general self-improvement class.
13. Impressive graduation ceremonies for those earning adult high school diploma or GED. Some colleges have a "Recognition Night" where all completers or those moving to the next step, i.e., ABE to GED, receive a certificate from a college or state official.
14. Local program directors can concentrate their attention on management, staff development, recruitment and not need to spend significant time on fund raising.. Community college funding is handled by the State Department of Education. Local budgetary decisions can be influenced easier in a community college.

S: 13 States
X: 12 Exemplary Programs
T: 14 Typical Programs
A: All Respondents (39)

		Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Disagree (3)	Strongly Disagree (4)	No Data/ Opinion (N)	Average Points
1. Administrative services are available (use of computers, graphics, A-V, etc.).	S	7	6	-	-	-	1.46
	X	12	-	-	-	-	1.00
	T	10	4	-	-	-	1.29
	A	29	10	-	-	-	1.26
2. Administrative support is available (clerical, technical, other staff).	S	6	6	-	-	1	1.50
	X	10	2	-	-	-	1.17
	T	10	4	-	-	-	1.29
	A	26	12	-	-	1	1.32
3. The college determines the program budget.	S	7	5	1	-	-	1.50
	X	6	4	1	-	1	1.55
	T	6	2	4	1	1	2.00
	A	19	11	6	1	2	1.75
4. The system provides for FTE or other State ABE/GED aid reimbursement.	S	8	4	1	-	-	1.46
	X	9	1	1	1	-	1.50
	T	9	1	2	1	1	1.62
	A	26	6	4	2	1	1.53
5. The budget includes local support funding.	S	5	7	1	-	-	1.69
	X	8	4	-	-	-	1.33
	T	8	-	3	1	2	1.75
	A	21	11	4	1	2	1.59
6. The college is an official GED test center.	S	7	6	-	-	-	1.46
	X	10	-	1	1	-	1.42
	T	12	-	1	1	-	1.36
	A	29	6	2	2	-	1.41

		Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Disagree (3)	Strongly Disagree (4)	No Data/ Opinion (N)	Average Points
7. ABE/GED helps fulfill the college mission.	S	6	6	-	-	1	1.50
	X	11	1	-	-	-	1.08
	T	13	1	-	-	-	1.07
	A	30	8	-	-	1	1.21
8. ABE class sites are located throughout the region.	S	6	7	-	-	-	1.54
	X	12	-	-	-	-	1.00
	T	12	1	-	1	-	1.29
	A	30	8	-	1	-	1.28
9. A local advisory committee is utilized.	S	3	7	3	-	-	2.00
	X	11	-	1	-	-	1.17
	T	10	1	-	3	-	1.71
	A	24	8	4	3	-	1.64
10. Classroom space is designed for adults.	S	6	7	-	-	-	1.54
	X	8	4	-	-	-	1.33
	T	8	5	1	-	-	1.50
	A	22	16	1	-	-	1.46
11. Promotion and recruitment techniques are effective.	S	2	9	-	-	2	1.82
	X	5	6	-	1	-	1.75
	T	6	7	1	-	-	1.64
	A	13	22	1	1	2	1.73
12. Student counseling is available.	S	4	8	1	-	-	1.77
	X	6	5	-	1	-	1.67
	T	4	9	1	-	-	1.79
	A	14	22	2	1	-	1.74
13. A student assessment process is an integral part of the program.	S	5	7	1	-	-	1.69
	X	7	5	-	-	-	1.42
	T	11	3	-	-	-	1.21
	A	23	15	1	-	-	1.44
14. Tutors are utilized.	S	3	9	1	-	-	1.85
	X	11	-	1	-	-	1.17
	T	11	3	-	-	-	1.21
	A	25	12	2	-	-	1.41

		Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Disagree (3)	Strongly Disagree (4)	No Data/ Opinion (N)	Average Points
15. Other program aides are utilized.	S	3	8	2	-	-	1.92
	X	6	5	1	-	-	1.58
	T	5	5	4	-	-	1.93
	A	14	18	7	-	-	1.82
16. An individually tailored learning plan is developed for each student.	S	1	10	1	-	1	2.00
	X	5	5	-	-	2	1.50
	T	8	5	1	-	-	1.50
	A	14	20	2	-	3	1.67
17. Outreach programs are offered to special populations.	S	5	6	1	-	1	1.82
	X	10	2	-	-	-	1.17
	T	9	3	1	1	-	1.57
	A	24	11	2	1	1	1.47
18. Interagency coordination is promoted.	S	4	7	1	-	1	1.75
	X	11	1	-	-	-	1.08
	T	8	5	1	-	-	1.50
	A	23	13	2	-	1	1.45
19. Staff training and/or staff development is provided.	S	3	10	-	-	-	1.77
	X	9	3	-	-	-	1.25
	T	11	3	-	-	-	1.21
	A	23	16	-	-	-	1.41
20. ABE teacher must be certified to teach adults.	S	2	3	6	1	1	2.50
	X	2	3	5	2	-	2.58
	T	3	1	6	3	1	2.69
	A	7	7	17	6	2	2.59
21. Teacher effectiveness is evaluated.	S	3	9	1	-	-	1.85
	X	8	3	1	-	-	1.42
	T	6	5	3	-	-	1.79
	A	17	17	5	-	-	1.69
22. Program evaluation is a priority.	S	2	7	3	-	1	2.08
	X	9	3	-	-	-	1.25
	T	7	7	-	-	-	1.50

		Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Disagree (3)	Strongly Disagree (4)	No Data/ Opinion (4)	Average Points
23. College attendance has prestige value for ABE/GED students.	S	5	7	-	-	1	1.58
	X	5	7	-	-	-	1.58
	T	10	3	-	-	1	1.23
	A	20	17	-	-	2	1.46
24. The program is designed as a total educational system under which there is a balanced emphasis on:	S	3	8	1	-	1	1.83
	X	10	2	-	-	-	1.17
	T	7	7	-	-	-	1.50
	A	20	17	1	-	1	1.50

(1) clearly stated learning objectives,

(2) assessment of learner needs and progress,

(3) instructional processes,

(4) guidance and counseling, and

(5) program management and evaluation. (from Lerche, 1985.)

STUDY OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE-ADMINISTERED ABE/GED PROGRAMS

In my community college ABE/GED program:	Circle one: Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Data/ Opinion
1. Administrative services are available (use of computers, graphics, A-V, etc.).	1	2	3	4	N
2. Administrative support is available (clerical, technical, other staff).	1	2	3	4	N
3. The college determines the program budget.	1	2	3	4	N
4. The system provides for FTE or other State ABE/GED aid reimbursement.	1	2	3	4	N
5. The budget includes local support funding.	1	2	3	4	N
6. The college is an official GED test center.	1	2	3	4	N
7. ABE/GED helps fulfill the college mission.	1	2	3	4	N
8. ABE class sites are located throughout the region.	1	2	3	4	N
9. A local advisory committee is utilized.	1	2	3	4	N
10. Classroom space is designed for adults.	1	2	3	4	N
11. Promotion and recruitment techniques are effective.	1	2	3	4	N
12. Student counseling is available.	1	2	3	4	N
13. A student assessment process is an integral part of the program.	1	2	3	4	N
14. Tutors are utilized.	1	2	3	4	N

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Data, Opinion
15. Other program aides are utilized.	1	2	3	4	N
16. An individually tailored learning plan is developed for each student.	1	2	3	4	N
17. Outreach programs are offered to special populations.	1	2	3	4	N
18. Interagency coordination is promoted.	1	2	3	4	N
19. Staff training and/or staff development is provided.	1	2	3	4	N
20. ABE teacher must be certified to teach adults.	1	2	3	4	N
21. Teacher effectiveness is evaluated.	1	2	3	4	N
22. Program evaluation is a priority.	1	2	3	4	N
23. College attendance has prestige value for ABE/GED students.	1	2	3	4	N
24. The program is designed as a total educational system under which there is a balanced emphasis on: (1) clearly stated learning objectives, (2) assessment of learner needs and progress, (3) instructional processes, (4) guidance and counseling, and (5) program management and evaluation. (from Lerche, 1985.)	1	2	3	4	N

25. Any additional observations you have about your program(s):

IOWA AREA COLLEGES

Iowa has a statewide system of 15 area colleges. These public, post-secondary, two-year institutions are organized as community colleges or vocational schools. Each area college serves a multi-county merged area which vary in size from four to twelve counties. Area colleges serve all of Iowa's 99 counties.

Area colleges are governed by locally elected boards of directors that consist of from five to nine members who are elected for terms of three years.

Each area college offers a comprehensive education program. All Iowans of post-secondary school age are eligible to attend any of the area colleges. Many area colleges also offer special programs for students who attend local secondary schools.

Area colleges have an "open-door" admission policy which guarantees Iowans an opportunity for educational assistance and career development regardless of previous educational attainment. To implement this policy, area colleges offer: assistance in acquiring the minimal development of skills prerequisite for entrance to preparatory career and college parallel programs; opportunities for remedial and developmental assistance; and supplementary services to handicapped and disadvantaged students.

The area colleges offer programs in three major areas of instruction.

Through adult education, the area colleges provide programs for part-time students. These programs include: adult basic education programs for adults who have less than an eighth grade education; high school completion programs leading to adult high school diplomas and preparation for the high school equivalency diploma; supplementary career programs of vocational and technical education for the upgrading of employed Iowans; and continuing education programs for adults who desire instruction for pre-occupational training, avocational and recreational interests, or other needs.

The preparatory career programs of vocational and technical education provide preparation for immediate employment in a wide variety of careers ordinarily requiring full-time instruction of four weeks to two years. Many of these programs are cooperative programs which provide classroom instruction in conjunction with paid employment experience related to the career preparation.

The college parallel program provides courses that may be transferred to other colleges and universities as the equivalent of the first two years of a four-year baccalaureate degree program including some programs that provide preparation for entry level employment in career option transfer programs.

Many unique educational programs and opportunities are also offered by the area colleges. These include programs available in two-year institutions in adjacent states through tuition reciprocity agreements, programs for incarcerated individuals in correctional facilities, evaluation and assessment centers, special programs for the handicapped including sheltered workshops, and customized training programs for new employees of business and industry.

All area colleges comply with approval standards adopted by the State Board of Education and the State Board of Regents.